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THE ARTS COLLEGE AND THE DEMOCRACY

The heyday of the elective system in the Arts College has passed, it is said. Harvard has made modifications of it, looking toward a correlation of the courses selected respectively by each student. Other colleges, alarmed at the apparent futility of their effort to make an education emerge from an elected succession of studies, have put restrictions upon the student's freedom of choice. The movement, faint as it is, seems to be in the way of a reassertion of the fitness of the college to dogmatize in the matter.

It was, perhaps, after all, not difficult to conclude that a college without a clear sense of what it was driving at was an anomaly. By its nature the college may be supposed to have wisdom above the common lot, wisdom at least greater than that of the student who comes to it to learn. Such is its function, its reason for being. For it to have refused, therefore, to define its aim, to have refused all but the most incidental guidance to its students, was to deny the very thing for which they may be supposed to have come to it. Yet the situation was not new; Socrates, in an older democracy, had beheld it among the Sophists. "In like manner," he had warned his young friend Hippocrates, "those who [offer] the wares of knowledge . . . and retail them to any customer who is in want of them, *praise them all alike*, and I should not wonder, O my friend, if many of them were ignorant of their effect upon the soul; and their customers equally ignorant."¹

It was, when we came to it, discouraging to find the inconsistencies into which we had labored, so long anticipated, so openly pointed out. We might have seen the warning, been aware of the inconsistency. I dare say that we were, throughout, really far from the concession that one thing was as good as another. We were never, for all our system, quite willing to deny that wisdom implies discrimination, or that it implies a

¹ This and the following quotations are from Jowett's translation.

structure of thought; but it is undeniable that we did put ourselves in the way of virtually making this concession, denying these truths — in the way of being judged as Sophists, retailing our wares to any customer who was in want of them, and, in ignorance of their effect upon the soul, praising them all alike. It was but little intellectual comfort to know that such imputations were just. The logical need was to discriminate among our wares, discover their effect upon the soul, and with an effective authority praise those that were best.

The advice of Socrates in the not dissimilar case was that Hippocrates should gain first an understanding of good and evil—advice which would point for us to the moral training of the older humanistic discipline. “If, therefore, you have understanding of what is good and evil,” he said, “you may safely buy knowledge of Protagoras or anyone; but if not, then, O my friend, pause and do not hazard your dearest interests at a game of chance. For there is far greater peril in buying knowledge than in buying meat and drink. . . . When you buy the wares of knowledge you cannot carry them away in another vessel; they have been sold to you, and you must take them into the soul and go your way, either greatly harmed or greatly benefited by the lesson: and therefore we should think about this and take counsel with our elders; for we are still young — too young to determine such a matter.”

To follow such advice, however, into the establishment of the older humanistic curriculum would seem to bear the taint of old-fashion. We have got away, with great trouble, from the limitations of that discipline. Yet the alternative within the range of the modern college — the sciences, natural and political — is not so new as to lend itself much glamor of modernity. It was the natural and political philosophers whom Socrates himself opposed. Scarcely had he uttered his advice to Hippocrates when they were confronted by Protagoras, whom the young man was eager to secure as teacher, and against whose teaching the warning had been directed.

“Do I understand you,” asked Socrates, “and is your meaning that you teach the art of politics, and that you promise to make men good citizens?”

"That, Socrates," Protagoras answered, "is exactly the profession that I make."

The alternatives are old, so old that the only taint that clings to the moral discipline comes from the fact that the Renaissance and the four not fruitless centuries that followed have staled it by their choice. It is not on the ground of modernity, therefore, that discrimination can be made in favor of the sciences. Besides, of the two, the sciences are, if anything, rather the older.

Illogical, however, as the elective system was, and hopeful as the present movement may be, there was one advantage in it: it was fluid; it crystallized nothing. It could gather to itself none of the fixity that is possible for the established curricula that may grow out of it. The hopefulness of the present moment, therefore, is troubled. Once organized, new curricula will attain to a fixity that has its dangers as well as its advantages. The present moment, then, when change is making for crystallization, is especially critical in the fortunes of the college.

I

The clue to problems of education, it is a platitude to say, lies in the aim of the society which is to be served. Education, in general, and apart from private variations, is no more than the endeavor to make, consciously, and by wise direction, for the end for which the society it serves is making. Since, therefore, we are a democracy, it is the *needs of a democracy* that must say what education should be given to those whom it tries to develop consciously for its service. Other training there is in the haphazard stress of necessity, or in the aloof selection of individuals, but there, in theory, society tries to do for those who submit themselves to it, the particular thing, out of all possible things, that will best make for its own ends. This is the function of the college. This is the *democratic* function of the college. Other function it is hard to conceive. What the ultimate aim of a democracy, is it would be hazardous to define; whole philosophies lie in the way of such an attempt. Yet for the moment its aims may be said, in large terms, to be civilization. With a less generous aim we can hardly be satisfied. If

democracy is justifiable, it must be justified on the ground that it is a civilizing force; if it were decivilizing, or less civilizing than a possible alternative, opinion that held it so would shift to the support of the better substitute. That there is not lacking to-day a growing body of such opinion everyone is aware. So threatening is it, indeed, as to make clear thinking and sharp definition imperative, not only for intellectual satisfaction, but for social self-preservation. We may say, therefore, that with us the college is enlisted by democracy in the cause of civilization.

Right democratic education is one that makes for civilization by the democratic route. Such a formula is, of course, not new; and it shows neither exceptionally clear thinking nor sharp definition. It has, however, for the moment, this advantage—that it includes the whole area within which, somewhere, the specific right definition lies, and the whole area within which the vagaries of opinion may wander. How baffling are the possible vagaries within it, is witnessed by the recent spectacle of the college, which, in trying to be democratic in its service to civilization, gave up the problem, and threw the responsibility of clear thinking and sharp definition upon the shoulders of its untrained students.

One of the most curious of current vagaries lies in the increasing appeal, in the name of democracy, for vocational training. Let democracy look to it, however, when, by its loose thinking, it cries at one with its worst enemies. For vocational training is aristocratic. It is the very device by which Plato, and every aristocrat since Plato, would establish and maintain the caste and inequality of an aristocratic society. We may well imagine the sardonic smile with which those thoughtful, if unsympathetic, observers of our own time, who believe democracy still to be on trial, or to have been on trial and failed, would greet, in their aloofness, the spectacle of such a plea. Their belief is that the desires of a democracy are inevitably for the low; that the concern of democracy is solely for its bodily sensations; that it has no craving for things of the spirit. They can see in such a plea for vocational training only a confirmation of their disbelief. They can see in it the plea for the sensations

of the body, and a disregard for the cultivation of the mind and the spirit. Nor are they dissatisfied; they believe that democracy is thus taking its inevitable course; that the sooner those whose inevitable taste is for the sensations of the body give up their futile dallying with the cultural discipline and are trained exclusively with the things of the body — their manual training, their agriculture, their book-keeping — the sooner will the democratic experiment conclude its wasteful course, and come to its inevitable downfall.

And with how bitter a smile would the fathers contemplate the spectacle of this plea for vocational training in the name of democracy! For whatever democracy may have come to mean to the democracy itself, for those who struggled so desperately to establish it, their sacrifice was ennobled by the vision of a social order in which the higher things of life should be open to the many, and of a many eager to avail themselves of the spiritual development which had been the privilege of the few. To them democratic government was but the means to the spread of that culture of which with such apparent injustice they saw the mass of mankind deprived. How poisonous a drop in their cup of hope, therefore, would have been the sound of the cry, made in the very name of democracy, to turn its schools over to the training of its masses in the lower offices of life, that minister, not to the mind and spirit, but to the body and to the sensations. Not, perhaps, that by the democratic theory, they should not have the thing they want; but that they should have wanted that kind of thing! Therein to-day lies the bitterness of the spectacle to those whose hopes are still pinned to the democratic faith.

For what is the meaning of democracy that any noble man would turn a finger to compass it? Surely not a belief that men should do as they wish, no matter what its good or evil. Rather a belief that there is in all men a craving for noble things—a craving too impartially given to be arbitrarily thwarted. Such is its real significance to every generous believer. The only education that is truly democratic, therefore, since democracy takes its bent away from aristocracy, is that which offers to those who in an aristocratic society would be

trained only in the lower offices of life, the higher education which before was the privilege of the few. Anything less is a concession to the logic of the aristocratic contention. For the people to cry out for just that training that would have been imposed upon it by an aristocratically favored class is to shatter the vision which alone ennobled the struggle out of which democracy arose, and which alone makes it worth the devotion of noble minds.

The same conclusion may be applied to the vocational use of the arts college. To plead that the youths who come to it from many kinds of homes and with various ambitions do not want the particular kind of thing that the older humanistic discipline afforded, but want what will be of use to them, is to fall with the schools into the scheme for class training that is far from democratic. It is to make for a civilization conceived and bred in aristocratic ideals, and to make for it by the aristocratic route. There is nothing paradoxical, therefore, in the statement that vocational training is class training — that it is aristocratic. If we are to find the real democratic education, we must look for it in the democratic ideal of civilization.

II

To say that civilization is at stake in the choice of a college curriculum is to use large terms with apparent fatuity. And yet we are, in a logical sense, bound to act as though it were. The college is the social instrument that has no other reason for being than its direct service to civilization. In so far, therefore, as we have any belief in the college at all, must we believe in it on that ground. Civilization *is* at stake so far as the college has an effect upon it.

The term 'civilization' is dangerously vague; yet it has at least this clear denotation — that it is not *things* but *effective ideas* — not engines, not paintings, not even books, but thoughts, wisdom, standards of judgments, qualities of will. Aztec writings are an evidence or a product of civilization — not, even in the loosest current speech, the thing itself. The thing itself is a human quality; it lies in the minds and actions of living men. If the accumulations of this quality were like the accumu-

lations of money, and could be handed down bodily from one generation to another, the problem of civilization would be a very different one. But here is the eternal distinction: what one generation attains to dies unless it is wholly re-made in the next. If it still lived, then, so far as what was learned is concerned, a community might say to its individuals: "Acquire what knowledge you will; civilization is safe on the basis of already acquired ideas." But that is not the case. Those fundamental ideas have ever to be re-created in the minds of the rising generation. To investigate the new, to test the untried, to roam critically on the frontiers of knowledge, is the function of the graduate school, the function of the scholar, of those already informed by the known and the established. To create and re-create the established ideas that underlie civilization is the function of the schools, of the undergraduate college. The question, therefore, remains: Out of what part of all our knowledge and ideas arises the essential thing we call civilization; what knowledge and ideas must we forever re-create if we wish to maintain it?

A second scrutiny of the word 'civilization' will bring out, even in popular usage, another limit to its sense. Do we not say that one man may be a lawyer, another a doctor, another an engineer, another a chemist, another a shoemaker, and yet that all may be civilized, though each is ignorant of the special knowledge of the others? Are we not willing to grant that a well-trained doctor or lawyer or engineer may be uncivilized and use his knowledge to uncivilized ends? Do we not accord civilization to Washington, Shakespeare, Marcus Aurelius, to whom modern technical knowledge was unknown? The questions grow absurd. The essential thing that we call civilization lies not in technical knowledge, but in the field of that other knowledge within the range of every man's responsibility—the moral field.

It is this essence, this civilization itself, that education is calculated to make for. Even, however, were there still a doubt as to the logical exclusion of technical ideas from our conception of civilization, on the ground that they are, if not the thing itself, at least the agents of its spread, here would remain the

fact, pertinent to the function of the college, that whereas we may say in general that the rewards that come to the chemist, the engineer, the electrician, are such as to ensure the renewal of their professional knowledge regardless of public provision, what devolves upon the community is to train its people to such high standards of judgment and will that this professional knowledge will be used to civilized and not uncivilized ends. The automatic pull for the youth is toward that knowledge which promises, not to make him better, but to make him "better off"; whereas it is the concern of the community, not to make him "better off," but to make him better. Those other things will take care of themselves; this must be cared for.

They do take care of themselves, those other things; there is no lack of technical and professional schools for technical and professional ends. But these ends are not civilization—the essence of it. If there is to be a democratic education it must be preoccupied with those things most needed by the democracy to establish the qualities that constitute that essence. The question is, then, as to the right discipline within that college whose function is still conceived to be direct service to civilization.

They are in so far both right, those critics who, in questioning the old humanistic discipline, say that the college must serve the whole democracy, not a single stratum of it. Where they fall short is in failing to recognize that the quality of a democracy is that not a single stratum of it is responsible for its civilization. The whole mass is responsible. The whole mass, therefore, must be leavened with those ideas that constitute the standards of moral judgment. There is no longer possible the decadent shift of responsibility to a "power not ourselves that makes for righteousness." The effective power in society is the power of knowledge and will in individuals. Most of mankind are mere followers, it is true; and all of mankind are followers in most departments of their thought and action; but they are followers of the ideas of individual leaders, and what lead they follow is, in a democracy, wholly dependent on their own wisdom of choice. It may be said, in general, that the

quality of a civilization is dependent upon two things: the knowledge and ideas of those who lead, and the quality of judgment of those who follow. In a democracy, however, the authority of those who lead has no other sanction than the voluntary adherence of those who follow. A man of wrong ideas has little effect upon civilization if none follow him; his ideas affect no actions but his own, and he soon dies. But likewise a man of right ideas has no effect if none follow. It may be said, therefore, that in a democratic civilization there is but one ultimate factor — the judgment and the will of those upon whom the responsibility of following lies. It is this judgment and this will of the followers — that is, of everyone — that must be trained.

Judgment in the selection of what idea to follow; will to follow a wise selection — discipline to such an end is, the only education logically to be called democratic; for upon the quality and prevalence of those attainments hang the maximum number of consequences to a democracy. The presence of a false leader in a democratic community, though he come in for a scoring at the hands of the moralist, is in itself insignificant. Without a voluntary following he would soon starve, or turn honest to win one. In an aristocracy the leader himself is most significant, for birth or position gives him power for good or evil; in a democracy the significant thing is not the leader, but the only thing that makes him a leader — the judgment and will of those who select and follow him. The humbug lives by the moral incompetence of his dupes. If our theatre is poor it is poor because of the bad judgment of those who go. If our magazines, our novels are poor they are poor because of the bad judgment of those who buy. Every corrupt, every weak politician is the witness of morally untrained voters, incompetent to judge the human quality of the candidate they have put into office. And just as every false, every paltry, every vague, every dishonest proposal depends for its life upon the judgment of those who face the option of selection or rejection, so does every idea that makes for good. The prevalence, therefore, of ability to judge, and of will to select the better and reject the worse, is the determining factor in the civilization of a democracy.

III

Have we not, however, in the end simplified too much? Is civilization reducible to such narrow terms? May not our American contribution to history be, worthily, simply the material development of material resources? May we not, like the Hanse towns of the Middle Ages, have our own type of civilization, and that a commercial one? Or are we too fully in that stream of European culture that flowed from Greece to Rome, and from Greece and Rome to Renaissance Europe, and from Europe to our own beginnings, to diverge in our own different directions? There are influences making both ways; the questions are not fanciful or impertinent. Yet when we discuss the Arts College we are, in a very real sense, committed to the stream of culture — committed to the belief that our civilization has as essential elements those things that are to be cultivated only by the prevalence of highly developed judgment of human nature and of the products of the human spirit. The Arts College is itself *par excellence* the product and the agent of that culture. The question is not one, therefore, as to the alternative of moral or industrial civilization. It lies wholly within the moral field of the cultural ideal. And so in the end we may repeat that the ability to judge human nature and the products of the human spirit, and the will to select the better and reject the worse, is the determining factor in our democratic civilization, and the only factor with which the college has any concern.

Socrates or Protagoras, therefore; Socrates or the natural philosophers; the humanities or the sciences — these, now more than two thousand years later, are still the alternatives in the educational problem. It is hardly an arbitrary distinction to say that, aside from mathematics, which are not neglected in either case, the distinctive subject of the humanistic studies is human nature, and the distinctive subject of the sciences is nature. A humanistic curriculum to-day would, it is true, include the physical sciences, and perhaps the political, but only briefly, and from the humanistic point of view, with attention to their ideas, their contribution to philosophy, rather than to their minutiae. No doubt, too, scientific courses contain ele-

ments that are cultural. The distinction still holds, however, that the emphasis of the one is upon human nature, and of the other upon nature. If, then, we are to have the judgment of our citizens, of those who are responsible for our civilization, relentlessly trained, is it to be done best through the discipline of the sciences or through the discipline of the humanities — by a knowledge of nature, or by a knowledge of human nature?

Doubts have crept in, perhaps in view of the large sweep of such studies as are represented in the humanistic curriculum — not incomprehensible doubts as to the quality of the thinking there involved. To one whose scholarly conscience is trained in the minute accuracies of physics, in the painstaking exactitude of biological experiments, in matters where one jot or one tittle less than utter precision invalidates the results and disgraces the scholar, there is inevitably a taint of looseness in the thinking done over a drama of Euripides, an ode of Horace, an essay of Addison, a lyric of Goethe. The scientific attitude is natural enough. Such approximations as will “go” in a lecture on poetry are of such stuff as quacks are made of in science. In matters where the scientist’s scholarly judgment, his scholarly pride, are involved, such thinking is his abhorrence. In the brief period set apart for the training of the mind, to train it in anything less than the utmost precision, to cultivate the intellectual conscience in fields where approximation takes the place of exact conclusion and vague premises take the place of fact, seems to be a waste of years that might be spent in a rigorous discipline where nothing would go but accurate observation and accurate thinking checked up step by step by the impersonal, relentless logic of nature. If we are to have clear-thinking citizens, if our civilization is dependent upon the just judgment of those who are responsible for it, where can we better train that thinking than in a discipline where it can be made rigorous and precise, and where it can be tested demonstrably in the immediate and tangible presence of the facts themselves?

There is, however, an unscientific slip in the logic of such reasoning, a fault that the scientist should be the first to recognize. Science has been the occasion, in the last half-century,

of an unprecedented degree of specialization. Specialization has been one of its triumphs. Exact thinking, runs the scientific logic, is well enough, but if you are to be a botanist you must be grounded in the data of botany; if you are to be a geologist you must be grounded in the data of geology. Goethe had a great mind, but he lacked the biological knowledge to give his premonition of the evolutionary doctrine effective substance. The hypothesis hovered in the air waiting for the inexhaustible data in the great mind of a Darwin. Thought agitated in a vacuum is fruitless. No amount of clear thinking in geology will make a man a great physician. No amount of clear thinking in chemistry will make him a great psychologist. Effective thought in any field is dependent upon a knowledge of the data of that field. Data are as important to right conclusions as logic. Hence specialization, and the incalculable advantage of the specialist. He must know the data of his subject: he must know their values, their qualities, their interrelations, the norms from which they vary, the standards of perfection by which they are to be judged. The processes of logical thought lie in the establishment of premises as well as in the drawing of conclusions.

If specialization, therefore, is so essential to right judgment—held so, preëminently, by scientists themselves—it is hard to see why a training in science should be thought to serve so effectively in something else. Or conversely, if training in one field can ramify so readily and make for the highest competence in another, it is hard to see the value of specialization. Such doubts, however, are ill-natured. The scientists are right; specialization is effective. The processes of logic lie in the right understanding of premises as well as in the drawing of conclusions. And the conclusions, when drawn, *apply only to the class to which the premises belong*. Yet it would be absurd to suppose that the problems of life—the problems momentous to the character of the citizen himself, and to the democracy which he is to serve for better or for worse—belong to the field of chemistry, physics, biology, and geology. Still there is, to confute our fine-drawn theories, the actual spectacle of the college to-day where thousands of youths are urged to select their studies on appar-

ently no other ground than a trust that a knowledge of ions, protozoa, and telluride will best help them to act wisely as individuals and as citizens.

The doctrine of specialization, however, would be poor indeed if it failed us in the most momentous activities of life. Puzzled by the socialistic doctrine, the peace movement, the demands of employees, the selection of a wife, the discipline of children, the problems of their education, the municipal election, the plea of a prosecutor, the speech of a candidate — types of the real problems of every man's personal and social responsibility — he may hardly be supposed to profit by a knowledge of ions, protozoa, and telluride, than by a knowledge of human nature, and of the most significant human experience and human thought. In all the decisions so momentous to the youth's character and to the civilization to which he, its best-trained, is so important, it skills but little whether he know Boyle's law, whether he know the Mendelian theory or Porter's extensions of it, whether he know the nebular hypothesis or Chamberlain's doubts of it, whether he know the atomic theory. Some men will know these things, just as every man will know the mysteries of his own vocation, though all men need not know them. There are graduate schools for the perpetuation of such recondite knowledge. But whether he know humanity and the subtle guises of good and evil is the question most significant both to himself and to the civilization he is trained to serve.

It is true that the thinking on the more human aspects of life is vaguer, looser, less precise, than the thinking done in science. Yet if the thinking is less exact and the conclusions mere probabilities, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the inevitable defect is great in proportion to the thinker's ignorance of the data of his subject. It is these data, therefore, these human aspects of life that he needs to be trained in — their qualities, their values, their interrelations, the norms from which they vary, the standards of perfection by which they are to be judged. Use to such an end gives the only significance they possess to literature, history, and philosophy. Used and often abused as a recreation, a sedative, a narcotic, a titillation of the fancy, or, as in the modern graduate school, as the playground of a curious

“scientific” technique for the training of abusive technicians, these exercises of the human reason are still, in that residuum of the best that is known as classic, significant for but one thing—that they provide the most accurate available presentation of the data of humanity. Here it is that human nature in its most significant aspects is revealed. Here its thoughts and their value and influences are shown, not only abstractly, but in their actual working out over long periods of time and under widely varying influences. Here are narrated its significant experiences. Across this stage march its great men, revealing the qualities that made them great, and powerful for good or evil. Here are traced their influences upon the lives of men and nations. Here may be seen the working, now for better, now for worse, of that ultimate power in civilization—the judgment and will of those effective numbers who determine what ideas shall prevail.

IV

This storing of the mind with the most significant data of human thought and experience—this process, this attainment, is culture. It is not, however, a matter of mere stuffing. There have been learned fools enough. The scientists are right in their insistence upon discipline of thought. To say nothing of mathematics, however, which has ever been a subject of the humanistic curriculum, the culture process has its own training of the reason that brings the mind far nearer to the type of thought needed in human affairs than the more exact ratiocinations of science. Science, it is true, disciplines the mind in the relation of cause and effect—the relation that lies at the heart of all moral problems; yet to know of causal relations in one field does nothing to reveal them in another. To reason from the presence of sulphuric acid as a cause to the opening of the pylorus of the stomach as an effect, does little to reveal the causal relation between the discipline of a child and its future effect upon his character. To know how mountains dwindle with frost and rain does little to reveal the causal relation between mental quality and moral conduct. But to read in a dialogue of Plato the relation between knowledge and virtue, to

read in Thucydides of the effect upon the democracy of the subtle flattery of the demagogue Alcibiades, to read in Horace of the effect of intemperate lust upon the civilization of Rome, to read in Marcus Aurelius of the effect of restraint and reflection upon the integrity of the soul, to follow in every drama the close-wrought chain of cause and effect that is the essence of the dramatic form, is to learn of causal relations that come home to the daily life of the citizen in those matters that are most momentous to his own character and to the civilization to which he is so important.

If it is supposed that none the less such reasoning is too general, based on data too intangibly elusive for present demonstration, while the reasonings of science are based on data specific, definite, present to hand, here again do we bring up with the doctrine of specialization. That the data of literature and history are large, intangible, remote, not susceptible of final definition, or absolute generalization, makes the very heart of the distinction in their favor; they are the data of the life they deal with. This is the life men live. These are the data men have had, and still have, to base their judgments on, to solve their problems with. They are large and intangible, it is true, and not to be brought into the laboratory for manipulation and experiment; but neither are the data of conduct. These are the data of conduct. And though the conclusions are at best mere probabilities, yet life goes forward on the basis of probabilities. We vote, we punish our children, choose our professors, select our friends, buy our books, support policies on premises that can never be weighed and measured in the laboratories. The faiths we act upon are mere tissues of probability. What's to come is yet unsure. The very definiteness and tangibility of the scientific process of reasoning renders it unsuited to the discipline of the mind for the problems of personal and social life. And in the event science, with its training in exact data, has reared a generation of scholars so impatient of these human problems that they have denied them, and turned history and literature into a science of documents and card catalogues, turned humanity into sociology, philosophy into psychology, and turned ideas and the discourse of reason out of doors.

Not only, however, is the student of the humanities trained in the large logic of events themselves; his mind is disciplined in the minuter delicacies of thought that make for precision. In the translation of languages he is put under the necessity of giving exact expression to a wide variety of ideas. Thinking is done in language. Every word added to a vocabulary cultivates a new area in the mind, opens up new relationships. And translation forces him into constant acquisition. It does even more than the reading of his own tongue, for it forces him to *use* the words he adds, and use them with a minute check upon their accuracy such as even science does not afford. To turn over the complex ideas of a Sophocles, a Plato, a Cicero, a Racine, a Goethe, into good English means to be practiced not only in the appreciation of subtle relationships, but also in the actual expression of them in the student's own instrument of thinking. It introduces to his understanding and use the subtle connectives and idiomatic turns, the grammatical resources of the language that are the means of the minuter delicacies of thought. It makes him aware of the finer shades of meaning by forcing him to express them. It introduces him to the very flavor of thought, in such phrases as "I dare say," "as it were," "to say the least," "so to speak." Years of such practice may well be believed to give him a mind trained in the processes and materials of thought, and capable of giving it effective expression.

Compared with this practice in the expression of the ideas of great and trained minds, the thinking of the student in the processes of undergraduate science is meagre and gross. In neither science nor the humanities does he do what is popularly known as original thinking. In both is he laboring to master and express what has already been mastered and expressed. The comparison must lie, therefore, in the value and variety of the thoughts involved. In undergraduate science the relationships he must master and express are largely the simple relationships of objective material things. What he must render into exact expression is largely the description of objective things. His processes of reasoning are largely embodied in the description of other things. His expression is his meagre own; it brings him no new experience with the possibilities of language; it

gives him no new vocabulary beyond a few technical terms, and leaves him where he was in his ability to appreciate the subtle relationships in the unfolding of a thought.

Reaction, however, has its excesses, and it would seem that to cling to Greek and Latin as still desirable for the humanistic discipline were to fall weakly back upon the old curriculum, regardless of the needs of the modern time—regardless especially of the claims of French and German. Yet for disciplinary purposes, though they should undoubtedly be taught, French and German are inferior to the ancient tongues; for whereas, after a year's study of them the student begins to think in the original, and comes as a consequence to the possibility of that same loose, vague approximation of the idea that so often vitiates his reading in English, in the reading of Greek and Latin, on the other hand, he must for years translate, before the idea emerges to him. This translation, this rendering into English, so soon unnecessary in French and German, keeps the student of the older literatures constantly in the practice of exact expression, and exact expression, moreover, of ideas that are fundamental to the whole of our Western civilization.

V

Such a discipline has proved its value; it has been the discipline of great men for the four hundred years since the Renaissance. It is still the discipline of Europe. Even her greatest scientists—Bacon, Newton, Lamarck, the Humboldts, Darwin, Huxley, Wallace—are products of it. Yet we in America, where trained leaders and trained followers are so needed yet so few, are moving away from the only discipline that is unknown by its fruits to be able to produce them. We have proved ourselves to Europe impatient of slow and deep foundations. Intolerant of what does not show, sometimes ignorant of what cannot be seen above ground, we plunge our untrained youth into the building of houses upon the sand. And we are humbly delighted when a few of them, as is inevitable, build higher than their humbler neighbors.

This impatience is nowhere so evident as in that other group of studies called the political and social sciences. They too

have for our age the recommendation that they apply directly to the superstructure. They repeat in their resolute modernity the words of that very Protagoras who was trying to secure Hippocrates as his pupil:—

“If Hippocrates comes to me he will not experience the sort of drudgery with which other Sophists are in the habit of insulting their pupils; who, when they have just escaped from the arts are taken and driven back into them by these teachers; . . . but if he comes to me he will learn what he comes to learn. And this is prudence in affairs private as well as public; he will learn to order his own house in the best manner, and he will be best able to speak and act in the affairs of the State.”

If we analyze the status of the political studies we find them curiously recommended to the untrained student. There is this obviousness of application, which says with Protagoras, “Come to me, and I will teach you what you want to know without all the tedious discipline others would force you into.” There is the appearance of dealing with human nature—an appearance that has lent some currency to their assumed title of “modern humanities.” There is, finally, their use of the term “science.” Here is contradiction: if they are sciences they are not humanities; if they are humanities they are not sciences. If they are an attempt at both, there is danger of a confusion which, for disciplinary purposes, would be fatal.

To say that the sciences deal distinctively with nature is admittedly true of the natural sciences. Of the political “sciences” it will, I dare say, be recognized as largely true when it is remembered that though they deal with humanity they deal with the part of it that is “natural” as distinguished from that surprising, that (scientifically speaking) incalculable element of the human spirit which constitutes the whole field of the humanistic discipline—the play of the mind, the moral passions. Economics deals with wealth in the hands of ideally self-seeking beings with all their other human qualities omitted. Such an exclusion is essential to any certainty of generalization. Political science deals with the machinery of government. Sociology, when it is not history or moral philosophy—i.e., when it is a science—deals with those animal elements in

humanity upon which alone scientific generalizations can be based — those uniform reactions to given stimuli, which lend themselves to exact calculation. It does, as a consequence, occupy itself largely with uncivilized peoples, anthropological data, and the least intelligent stratum of civilized society. This discrimination is in no way invidious. It only points the distinction that in so far as they are sciences they must needs deal with calculable elements. In so far as they are something else do they invalidate their disciplinary value as sciences, without attaining to the purity of the humanistic concern for human nature and the products of the human spirit.

To object to this combination of nature and human nature as a subject of undergraduate discipline is not to object to the political studies *qua* studies. On the contrary, it is to recognize that they are too important to be undertaken by untrained minds. They should be approached humbly, with a mind steeped in history and the data of humanity, and trained in rigorous thinking. They are not subjects of discipline — settled subjects in which the fundamental hypotheses, the data, and the principles are established; they are the field of dispute, the field of theory, the field of the *application* of that knowledge of human nature, the foundations of which it is the purpose of the college to lay. It is those other studies, the real humanities, that in theory are reasonable, and in history have proved effective to discipline the mind in this fundamental knowledge of human nature and the nature of good and evil.

Recent thinking in matters of college education has grown confused, perhaps in proportion as the number of educated men on college faculties has decreased. At any rate the assertions that underlie the modern changes in the collegiate routine and the collegiate aim bear the marks of undisciplined thinking. Undisciplined thinking responds to prejudice, and the main effort of prejudiced thought is to transfer a name which carries the credit, the "good will" earned by one thing, to a thing which has never earned it. A college education gained its high place in men's esteem through the superiority of men trained in the humanities; and the effort is to transfer the term "college education" and its prestige to a training in nature, in trades, in

anything desired. Democracy won men's loyalty, their passionate devotion, through the generous faith it implied that the longing for the noble things of life was too impartially distributed to be with justice arbitrarily thwarted in all but a few; and the effort is to transfer the term 'democracy' and its prestige to the fulfilling of all the desires of the people, be they good or bad. Science has earned men's admiration for its thoroughness, the reliability of its generalizations, and its service to humanity; and the effort is to transfer the term 'science' and its prestige to the political studies which, in their nature, cannot be precise, and cannot be exact in their generalizations. The humanities won their admiration of men through the rich culture which came through their mastery; and the effort is to transfer the term 'humanities' and its prestige to the political studies, which are largely preoccupied with the least human elements in man.

The confusions of undisciplined thought are endless, and their evil incalculable. The choice of what ideas to follow is largely determined for us by the terms in which they are couched. It is the very function of words to crystallize and preserve our ideas. Yet how, if they are misused by loose thinking? We may love the flag and follow loyally where it leads; but how, if it has been taken by the enemy and is flaunted as a lure? The need of our democracy is a discipline that will reestablish clear thinking and right judgment in human affairs, to give us clear-headed citizens to conduct public business, clear-headed teachers to educate our youth, a clear-headed electorate to know whom to trust, whom to follow. And the humanistic discipline, concentrating upon the data of human experience and human thought, and disciplining the mind of its student in the very instrument of his thinking—language—has proved in the past its effectiveness to fulfil these imperative needs of our democratic civilization.

And here, too, may be done what science leaves even untried. It has been natural enough to hear what we have been accustomed to hear in ever louder volume from the very sources that have changed the college,—the cry for moral education. Step by step with the recession of the older humanistic discipline has seemed to disappear the sense that this older discipline was

wholly moral in its purpose — that morality depends upon a training of the judgment in the data of humanity, its thoughts, its actions, and their consequences. And step by step has grown the superficial sense that it consists in abstinence from vice and in the practices — not to be despised — of doing good. And step by step has swelled the cry that the college should give moral instruction (can it be of this latter type, applied like a plaster, externally?) while more and more the students have flocked to studies which lie wholly without the moral field, and which can never touch their moral natures. The will to choose the better and reject the worse is no less important to a character or a civilization than a power of high judgment, as those who make the moral plea seem to know without seeming to know that by substituting the unmoral for the moral studies they have destroyed the discipline that was founded for no other purpose than the creation of that virtue for which they are so solicitous. There is, it is true, no specific for the creation of virtue; yet there has been in human experience no method so effective to stimulate it as the contemplation of human nobility: Jeremiah, Christ, Socrates, Antigone, Marcus Aurelius, St. Francis — the roll is long, and of those who have been stirred by them to emulation and the love of virtue, the roll is endless. To spend four years in such preoccupation, while the memory is retentive, the reason expanding, the heart impressionable, and the spirit generous, may well be thought the best assurance a society could provide for the virtue of its best-trained citizens. This is the end of education. When we have returned to this in the college, we shall have crystallized what we can scarce afford to have in less than eternal form.

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